Scandinavian vs. Dutch Interior Design

From art deco to rustic farmhouse, there are hundreds of interior design styles you can choose from when it comes to decorating your space. But if you can't keep up with the trending and changing names, then rest assured that there are two classic interior design styles that have not only stayed in style for years, but continue to grow in popularity: Scandinavian and Dutch interior design.

If you're wondering what the difference is between Dutch design and Scandinavian design, you're not alone. These two terms are often used interchangeably due to their similarities, but both styles have some key differences.

Dutch Design vs. Scandinavian Design – History

Before we can dive into the world of Dutch design vs. Scandinavian design, we first need to understand the deep-rooted history and influences of these two unique styles.

History of Dutch Interior Design

First, let's start with a common misconception: Dutch is not a country, it's not even a place—but it is an adjective that represents the people and language of the Netherlands.

The Netherlands is a small yet culturally rich country located in northwestern Europe. Also known as Holland, the Netherlands is known for its notorious capital, Amsterdam, it's fairytale windmills, fields of tulip, countless museums and much more.

Dutch interior arrangement is an art form in the Netherlands, and gained popularity in the early 1900's when ['t Binnenhuis](#) became one of the most important, if not *the* most important furniture creation movements of the time. Several architects and designers had a hand in this movement such as:

> ➢ Jac. Van den Bosch
> ➢ H.P. Berlage
> ➢ Gerling Hoeker
> ➢ William Hoeker

Together, these professionals focused on designing well-crafted yet affordable furniture for the masses. This movement carried well into the 21st century and these designers' work helped pave the way for practical, yet well-made modern furniture.

History of Scandinavian Interior Design

Scandinavian style encompasses a region consisting of five different Scandinavian and Nordic countries:

- ➢ Denmark
- ➢ Sweden
- ➢ Iceland
- ➢ Finland
- ➢ Norway

Like the Netherlands, each country is known for their own unique culture and interior design history. So, what do you get when you mix these countries together?

The result: the clean and crisp Scandinavian design—also commonly referred to as "Scandi" design.

Scandi design began in the early 1900's when the meshing of these five countries' similar minimalistic interior arrangement styles first occurred. While Scandinavian design was quite popular during the 20th century and still is today, this style's emphasis on creating clean and sleek spaces didn't gain popularity in the United States until the 1950's.

During this time the Lunning Prize was introduced by a Danish-born man turned New-York businessman to showcase young Scandinavian designers. The Lunning Prize was awarded annually between the years of 1951 to 1972 and is credited for helping increase Scandi design popularity in the United States.

Dutch vs. Scandinavian Design Styles

Now that we've gotten familiar with Dutch Design vs. Scandinavian Design from a historical standpoint, let's take a closer look at the two from a style standpoint.

Dutch Design

Dutch design can be expressed in four words: simple, practical, innovative, and timeless.

While this style may be simple, it should not be overlooked. Dutch interior designers believe that less is more, but also that there is beauty in balance. So while these designers tend to opt for light walls while incorporating earthy tones, the white is often offset with the occasional pop of vibrant hues from a painting or other piece of artwork. This contrast creates an eye-catching appearance yet remains subtle rather than distracting, but also gives it a quirky feel.

Dutch furniture is also simplistic by nature, but is of the highest-quality and aids in the maximization of any space. A large family table is one of the most characteristic Dutch furniture pieces. It's practical, yet it's hand-crafted wood compliments the earthy hues strategically incorporated throughout the rest of the space from the walls to the pillows.

While Dutch style favors the incorporation of a grand table, this style also believes that clutter diminishes the beauty of a space, and clunky furniture is no exception. The practicality of Dutch design ensures that every square inch of a room is being used to its optimum potential, while still keeping a comprehensive and fluid path, allowing you to seamlessly move in and out of rooms.

What's more, this minimalistic approach is not going out of style anytime soon. Add Dutch furniture to your space as a timeless, high-quality piece that'll stay in style for years to come.

Scandinavian Design

Scandi design shares a lot of similar characteristics with Dutch design. This minimalistic style looks both effortless and purposeful, with the incorporation of practical, clean cut furniture and light earthy colors.

Like the Dutch style, it sticks to neutral hues but isn't afraid to add a splash of color or fun patterns to a space. Symmetrical yet colorful patterns are visually appealing and support the idea that while a space may be minimal, it doesn't have to be boring.

Light colored walls are also ideal for maximizing small spaces, especially those that receive lots of natural light. The idea is that sunlight bounces off the light walls and makes the space seem not only brighter and more inviting, but gives it a larger appearance.

Scandinavian design makes conservative use of furniture, only adding a few pieces with a sleek and [humble style](#) to the space at a time.

Difference Between Scandinavian Design & Dutch Design

Looking back at the background of both Scandinavian and Dutch design, it's both apparent in name and history that these two styles originate in different regions with unique cultures and histories of their owns. While both rose to popularity in the United States during the same mid-twentieth century era, they have managed to remain similar yet separate styles to this day.

Both styles employ a minimalistic approach, and include light and bright spaces with earthy tones to maximize space. However, Dutch design tends to add more vibrant colors for a quirky and humorous feel more so than the Scandinavian design. They both also include practical yet innovative furniture that's built to last—against changing trends and long-term use.

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